



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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INSIDE TRACKS

The Newsletter of Region One

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Winter 1996

Formal hearing in Region One on proposed hunting seasons set for Saturday, January 27, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cavanaugh's in Kalispell. Hearing preceded by an open house, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Commission Creates New Opportunity for Comment

From Commissioner Charlie Decker...

During the FWP Commission meeting last month in Helena, we outlined the proposed hunting season changes for big game in 1996 and for mountain grouse, upland game bird and falconry for 1996/97.

We are making a new effort to solicit public comment on the proposed seasons by holding a formal hearing in each region of the state in addition to the single hearing in Helena. The Kalispell meeting is set for Saturday, January 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cavanaugh's.

We'll analyze the comments from these regional hearings and a February 3 hearing in Helena, and make

final decisions at our Commission meeting in Helena on February 5 and 6.

The proposals include the following:

Deer: We are considering two options for deer. In the first option, deer seasons would remain as they are now. The second option involves splitting the two-week either sex whitetail season to the first and last weeks of the season; antlerless mule deer would be legal only during the first week. The thought behind opening the last week to either sex whitetail is to allow folks to hunt a doe for the freezer. The change may also protect some bucks by allowing a hunter to take a doe rather

than waiting for a small buck during the last week.

Elk: Three options are being considered for elk seasons in the region. These are: (1) current regulations, or status quo; (2) antlered bulls with cows on permit; (3) brow-tine antlered bulls with cows on permit. The second two options would make regulations more uniform across hunting districts, and would give us a better handle on cow harvest.

Black Bear: A uniform closing date (May 15) is proposed for black bear season in northwest Montana hunting districts; this would have the effect of (Cont. on Page 2)

The FWP Commission

History:

1895: Montana Fish and Game Board appointed by the Legislature

1921: Montana's 5-member Fish and Game Commission established

1934: Model State Game and Fish Law adopted by the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners; formalized multi-member commissions and established relationships of department directors and commissioners

1941: Montana's Commission given regulatory power over opening and closing seasons, setting of bag limits, and creating game preserves; Commission established a program to obtain scientific data as a basis for wildlife management

1991: Montana Fish and Game Commission name changed to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission

Function:

The FWP Commission serves as the liaison between the public and FWP. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor. Commissioners set fishing and hunting seasons, bag limits, oversee land acquisition and special management areas, and set state park fees and regulations.



THE FWP COMMISSION: Dale Tash, Dillon; Darlyne Dascher, Fort Peck; David W. Simpson, Hardin, Vice Chair; Charles R. Decker, Libby; Stan Meyer, Great Falls, Chairman.

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Wildlife Management in North America

Did you know?

Consider these policy guidelines for wildlife management developed by a "blue ribbon" panel. The policy noted that the "demand for hunting was outstripping the supply" and urged (1) improved opportunities for hunting on public land and (2) landowner compensation for supporting wildlife and hunting. Specific points included:

1. Extend public ownership and management of game lands;
2. Recognize the landowner as the custodian of public wildlife on private land;
3. Bring the sportsman, landowner, and public into a closer relationship to benefit wildlife;
4. Maintain professionally trained wildlife managers;

5. Study ways to make land produce more wildlife;
6. Recognize non-hunters and scientists as partners with sportsmen and landowners in wildlife conservation;
7. Provide adequate funding for the benefit of wildlife; sportsmen would pay for the activities that alone serve game species.

Surprisingly, this "American Game Policy" was penned in 1930 by Aldo Leopold as chairman of a committee reporting to that year's American Game Conference. Since 1930, some of the 7 points have come to fruition in North American wildlife management; others have not been addressed fully.

Supervisor's Award Goes to Beth Sorensen

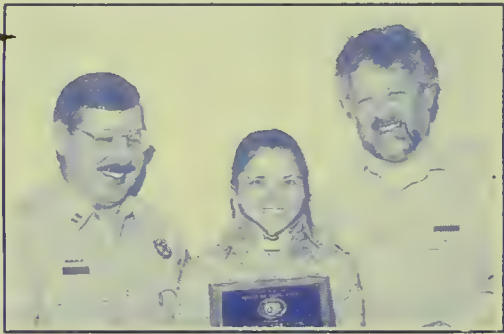
Beth Sorensen received the FWP Supervisor's Award for her efforts on behalf of wildlife in northwest Montana. Sorensen serves as the volunteer

wildlife rehabilitator for the region, often using her own funds and facilities to aid injured wildlife. She works closely with FWP wardens and biologists in a variety of rehabilitation projects.

Sorensen concentrates on birds of prey, but works with deer, moose and bears on a case by case basis. A physician's assistant in Kalispell, she is uniquely qualified to provide care to wildlife. She is assisted by her husband, Kalispell pediatrician Mark Sorensen.

Sorensen, once called the Florence Nightingale of wildlife rehabilitators, has received numerous awards for her work with injured and orphaned wildlife.

AWARD WINNER. Beth Sorensen displays her Supervisor's Award at a recent meeting in Kalispell. Region One Supervisor Dan Vincent (right) and Warden Captain Ed Kelly made the presentation.



Commission Creates New Opportunity for Comment on Proposed Hunting Season Changes

(Cont. from Page 1)

eliminating the last two weeks of the bear season in hunting districts which are now open through May 31. We are not meeting our criteria for median age of female bears in the harvest; too many young female bears are being harvested, particularly in these last two weeks.


Mountain Lion: With mountain lions, we are considering some new options. For the first time in over 40 hunting seasons, I had a chance encounter with a mountain lion. My son had a chance encounter with a different cat three days later. While this is not a scientific survey, it does suggest a strengthening cat population in my neck of the woods. The proposals include: (1) hunting for lions during the general big game season in selected hunting districts with limited take: this would be without dogs, and lion tags must be purchased by August 31; the same rules on reporting, etc., would apply; (2) 25 percent of the lion quota in each region would be met by permits

issued through a drawing; these permits would be valid during the entire lion hunting season.

Other Proposals: We are also considering two options for mountain grouse. One proposal would be to keep the season dates as they are, the other proposal would close the season on November 1. We are also proposing to lower the daily limit to three, with a two-day possession limit.

We will be considering three options for a muzzleloader season. One would be during the last week of the archery season (limited number of permits); one would be prior to the general season hunt; the third option would be a short post-season hunt.

I encourage all interested folks to provide comments to me or to FWP on these proposed changes. We'll have detailed copies and explanation of the changes at the January 27 meeting in Kalispell. You can also call or stop in the FWP office in Kalispell (752-5501) to get a copy of the proposals. My phone

number in Libby is 293-6465; I'm always interested in your input. 



WHITETAIL DEER HUNTING season could be changed in 1996. Hunters are invited to comment on proposed hunting season changes on January 27 in Kalispell. Shane Salisbury of Whitefish harvested this whitetail on opening day of big game season in 1995.

Citizen Advisory Committee Begins Work

The 11-member Citizen Advisory Committee met for the first time last month with the FWP Region One management team. The group developed guidelines for Committee operation, and FWP and Committee responsibilities:

GUIDELINES

- Term length: Ongoing, but staggered (options to be presented at 1/29/96 meeting)
- Membership number will stay at 11. Other people may be invited to attend on case-by-case basis.
- All meetings will be open and the public is welcome to attend and observe.
- Minutes and meeting reminders will be sent by FWP and will be timely.
- Meetings will be conducted quarterly, in general, with additional meetings held initially.

REGION ONE RESPONSIBILITIES

- The R-1 FWP will listen to and consider any idea and evaluate every piece of advice.
- R-1 will stand behind decisions it makes and will not "blame" the Advisory Committee.
- FWP has the responsibility of protecting Montana's natural resources, but recognizes there is a broad spectrum of different choices which can be made yet still fulfill its mission.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Committee will deal with big picture issues and not get too specific.

•The Committee will serve as a reality check for the R-1 FWP and let R-1 know if it is "tracking" with public expectations.

•A specific product is not necessary, but optional.


•The Committee will carry messages from R-1 Management Team to the public.

•The Committee will carry messages from the public back to R-1's Management Team.

•Members of the Committee will also be responsible for making their

own personal input to the Department.

The Committee is now identifying issues which will be taken up over the first year. Initially, the advisors will examine the hunting season setting process and offer suggestions for improvements.

Advisors will attend the January 27 hunting season hearings and report their suggestions during the next citizen advisory meeting, scheduled for January 29 at the FWP headquarters in Kalispell. 



THE REGION ONE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE: back row, left to right: Tony Kastella, Whitefish; Warren Illi, Kalispell; Brent Mitchell, Kalispell; Rob Shrider, Ronan; Bill

Kemp, Libby; Craig Phillips, Thompson Falls; front row, left to right: Steve Hawkins, Eureka; Bruce Babcock, Kalispell; Ben Rosetto, Kalispell; Theresa Conner, Columbia Falls; Michael Ware, Kalispell.

Reminder:

Ban on Use of Salmonids for Cut Bait in Effect as of Jan. 1


The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission officially adopted a ban on the use of salmonids for cut bait; the restriction took effect January 1, 1996. The ban against using parts of trout, salmon, or whitefish for bait is part of an effort to stem the spread of whirling disease which is carried in fish bony parts.

The Commission previously

banned the use of sculpins for bait for the same reason. Whirling disease causes significant mortality in salmonids and has now been identified in 16 locations in Montana including the Swan River.

The cut bait ban is just one of several control measures. Anglers, hunters, trappers, and people working in water should wash mud off clothing

and equipment before going to new waters, boat bilges and livewells should be drained and dried, and fish parts should never be moved between waters. Fish entrails should be buried or placed in garbage.

FWP will host an informational meeting on whirling disease January 25 at FWP headquarters in Kalispell. 

Crossing the Barriers Committee Receives National Award

Over the past four years, the Region One Crossing the Barriers Committee has been working for more hunting and fishing opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Committee has now been recognized for their work by the national States Organization for Boating Access; the organization presented its Special Projects Award to the Committee last fall at the organization's annual meeting in Lexington Kentucky.

The Crossing the Barriers Committee received the award based on its projects to help anglers with disabilities.

These projects include: sponsoring the annual Fishing Without Barriers Day on Flathead Lake; providing fishing events for children with disabilities; establishing an access for anglers with disabilities at Trout Lake; assisting in a number of other fishing access projects; and working on a number of fundraisers to finance fishing access projects.

All of us at FWP are proud of the accomplishments of the citizen members of the Crossing the Barriers Committee, and we wish them continued success! 🐟



AWARD WINNERS. Citizen members of the Region One Crossing the Barriers Committee accept a national award for their efforts to help anglers with disabilities. The award was presented by the national States Organization for Boating Access at that

organization's annual meeting in Lexington Kentucky last fall. Pictured are: back row, left to right: Harry Grove, Jerry Howard, Jim Moyer, B. Domrose; front row, left to right: Joan Hula, Ken Chomo, Harold McMillan, and Clarence Taber.

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